

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

An item handling system, comprising: at least one item preparation station for printing machine-readable symbols on items; and at least one item handling station for receiving  
5 items from the at least one item preparation station and being operable to machine read and process information contained in the symbols printed on the items; wherein: the at least one item handling station includes a messaging unit for generating messages representative of the readability of symbols read thereby and transmitting the messages to the at least one item preparation station; and the at least one item preparation station  
10 includes an indicator for providing an indication of a readability of symbols printed thereby in response to messages received from the at least one item handling station.